lt Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

should inherit the property and not men. The rule amongst the Khasis is that the youngest daughter "kobla" the religion, "ka kot ka niam." Her house is called, "ka ing sang," and it is here that the members of the family assemble to witness her performance of the family ceremonies. Here is, therefore, the largest share of the family property, because it is she whose duty it is to perform the family ceremonies, and propitiate the family ancestors. The other daughters, however, on their mother's death are entitled, each of them, to a share of their mother's property, although the youngest daughter gets the lion's share, e.g. the family jewellery, and the family house, and the greater part of what it contains. The youngest daughter cannot dispose of the house without the consciously consent of her sisters. If the youngest daughter dies, she is succeeded by the next youngest daughter, and so on. All the daughters are bound to repair the house of the youngest daughter free of cost. In the event of the youngest daughter changing her religion, or committing an act of sang, or taboo, she loses her position in the family, and is succeeded by her next youngest sister, as in the case of a death. Failing daughters, inheritance would pass by the "knight's move" to the sister's youngest daughter, who would be succeeded by her youngest daughter, and so on. Failing sister's daughters succession would revert to the mother's sisters and their female descendants. In the Jaintia Hills the inheritance of all real property passes from mother to youngest daughter. No man in the uplands of the Jaintia Hills can possess landed property, unless it is self-acquired property. In the Jaintia Hills, if a man dies and leaves acquired property, his heir will be his mother, if alive, excluding wife, sons, and daughters. If the wife, however, undertakes not to re-marry, she will inherit half of her husband's property, which at her death will descend to her youngest daughter by him.

Amongst Khasis all property which has been acquired by a man before marriage is considered to belong to his mother; indeed it may be said to belong to the man's kur, or clan, such property being called by Khasis, "ka mei king kur" (the earnings of the house of the clan). After marriage, if there are children, the case is different, provided that the property

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

42/ has been acquired by the man after marriage. Here the wife
428 and children would inherit the acquired property, the youngest daughter obtaining the largest share of such property on the death of the wife. If there were no daughter, the acquired property would be equally divided amongst the sons.

[127] The following examples of the Synteng law of inheritance
728 are taken from the exhaustive diaries recorded by the late Mr. Heath, who was for some years Sub-Divisional Officer of Jowai. In the Nangkli doloiship ancestral land passes from mother to her youngest daughter; again, if a youngest daughter who has no acquired dies, the next youngest in point of age succeeds. Should such direct female succession fail, the family tree has to be looked up for the nearest branch, in which the youngest female, or her youngest female descendant, succeeds. Thus, respecting ancestral land, the youngest daughter or youngest female descendant of youngest female heir is virtually heir to ancestral property. If a woman dies leaving acquired property, her youngest daughter or youngest granddaughter of that youngest daughter succeeds to all. In default, next youngest daughter, and so on. In default of daughters, the youngest son inherits. A man can hardly, in any circumstances, possess ancestral land; his property must almost necessarily be self-acquired. If a man dies leaving acquired property, his heir will be his mother, if alive, excluding wife, sons, and daughters. If the wife undertakes, however, not to marry again, she will get half, which will descend to her youngest daughter by her deceased husband. The mother, who thus gets the whole or half of her son's property, leaves it to her youngest daughter, or youngest daughter of that daughter, and so on, as described above in the case of a woman leaving ancestral or acquired property. If there is no mother, the man's youngest sister stands next heir with the same right as her mother. If there is no mother or sister, then the sister's female descendants stand in the man's mother's place. If there are none of these, then the man's youngest daughter succeeds to all. Ancestral property cannot be alienated without the consent of all the heirs in the direct. A gift of self-acquired property to any amount can be made by a donor during his lifetime. Acquired property cannot, however, be left by will out of the course mentioned by

1:Gordon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

adoption of a female obviates the family dying out (*iap dak*), which to the Khasi is a very serious matter, inasmuch as there will then be no one qualified to place the bones of its members within the family tomb (*ka ka iliep shiong mawbah*), and to perform the requisite funeral ceremonies. Amongst the Khasis no particular ceremonies are performed at the time of adoption; but some of the Syntengs observe a religious ceremony which consists largely of a feast to the clans-folk, at which liquor, rice, dried fish, and ginger are partaken of. Before the feast commences, each clansman is provided with a small gourd (*u klieng*) filled with liquor, a little of the latter is then thrown on the ground from the gourd, and the following words are uttered:—

"Oh, God! oh, Lord! oh, ruling king Bishorum, now the *pyrsop iing* ceremony is about to be performed, let the ceremony be propitious, and let males and females (of the clan) increase in numbers, so that the clan may become great, and respected, and that intelligent male members may spring up." No such ceremony is, however, observed, it is understood, in the Nartiang and Rulang dolaships.

In the case of a family being *iap dak* (extinct), the family property, according to Khasi custom, passes to the Siem. Therefore it is to the interest of the members of families to adopt a female, when such necessity arises. As there is no religious ceremony which is compulsory to the Khasis on the occasion of an adoption, perhaps we are almost justified in concluding that in former times the adoption custom did not exist, more especially as the Khasis possess a special word, *iap dak*, for describing a family the females of which have all died out; and it is admittedly the custom for the Siem to succeed to the property of such a family. The Syntang custom of *'sep iing* may have been borrowed from the Hindus, when the Rajas of Jaintia became converts to that religion.

TENURE OF LAND AND LAWS REGARDING LAND.

Land in the Khasi Hills proper, i.e. land in the high plateau, is held somewhat differently from land in the Jaintia Hills and

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there than a thousand of them who have been converted to the Hindu religion.

This group of people possesses the possibility of expansion, since they have at their disposal within the area of the Khasi and Jaintia Mountains a territory of 6,022 English square miles, with only 68 persons per square mile. Although wide areas are not built up and the system of shifting fields prevents the full utilization of the land, it is still true that with this small population figure by far the largest part of the whole population (286,791) is dependent on agriculture; trade and manufacturing only play a subordinate part.

With regard to the division of the sexes, the two large religions of Assam, Hinduism and Mohammedanism, show the same proportion as in the rest of India, a lower number of women than men. But among the Khasi the women are more numerous than the men. In the Brahmaputra valley with its greater Hindu population there are only 918 women for every 1,000 men; in the Surma valley, with a greater Moslem element, there are 907. But the situation is reversed among the Khasi, where there is a surplus of 74 women for every thousand men. The position of the women is basically different among this people. It is based on the customs and usages of matrimonial rights that prevail among them, which are predominantly based on possession and which find honorable expression in possession.

I. Property Rights in the Family Property.

The great principle which governs property among the Khasi, is that all family property rests in the hands /120. A/ /Fig. 1. Khasi Girls and Women with their Carrying Baskets. Fig. 2. An Old Clan Mother in the Village Laitumkhra. / /120. B/ /Fig. 3. At the Church of Egg Throwing/ Fig. 4. Khasi Girls and Men in Festive Dance Clothing. / /120 C/ /Fig. 5. A Group of Spinning/ /120. D/ Fig. 6. A Holy Grove and Part of the Village Sohiong/ /120/ of the women and not of the men. The man can never be the owner of family property, and it can never be transferred to him. He may perhaps acquire some property through his own industry and work, but even that will pass into feminine hands by the path of inheritance. The concept of family is not as narrowly drawn here as in our country. This is a question of the clan-family, the clan. The head of it is always the youngest daughter, who, even when she has become old, bears the honorable name ka Iarit in the Jaintia Mountains, and in the Khasi Mountains ka Khadduh, the last, the youngest. Around her gather her nearest blood relatives, brothers and sisters, and children. For example in

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manure, and primarily for breeding, since the oxen cannot be dispensed with for the cultivation of the fields, especially of the rice fields, where the soaked earth must be trampled to a slimy mush. From the fowl the eggs are particularly prized, since they find an almost daily use in the questioning of oracles in cases of misfortune and sickness. (3) Oxen, pigs and goats serve for sacrificial purposes,(4)

3. P.R.T. Gurdon, The Khasis, (London 1907) pp. 221 ff.; Becker, "Das Eierwerfen der Khasi," /Egg throwing Among the Khasi/, Anthropos, Vols. 10-11 (Vienna, 1915-16), pp. 494 ff.; P.F. Siegmüller, "Aus dem religiösen Leben der Khasi" /The Religious Life of the Khasi/ Anthropos Vol. 16-17 (1921-1922), pp. 419 ff.

4. Becker, "Die Soogrem-Puja in den Khasi-Bergen" /The Soogrem Puja in the Khasi Mountains/, Anthropos, Vol. 4, (Vienna, 1909) No. 1-6, pp. 890 ff.; Siegmüller, loc cit.

and they are also a welcome addition to rice at all festive occasions such as arrow shooting, (5) at the name giving, /131/ at weddings,

5. Becker, In Steenal etc., /In the Valley, etc./, pp. 238 and 267.

and at the cremation of the dead.

Further the various huts belong to the family property, the erection and maintenance of which is the work of the members of the clan, the brothers, nephews, and grandsons. The hut of the clan mother is likewise considered the center of the whole family, and its possession forms the outer sign of the dominance of the clan mother. Here she holds the family sacrifices and also keeps the special treasures. These are considered to be those things which are connected with the religious cult. Special reverence and sacrifice is due the oldest clan mother, as the original founder of the clan, and her brother is each clan family; in addition there are a series of other spirits which vary according to the family clan. The branch of the Khasi people who live on the Jaintia Mountain, the so-called Synteng, have probably preserved the old Khasi customs the most faithfully. There in the hut of the clan mother are found the following utensils in the service of the divination, who are nearly always feminine: mats, little baskets for rice, gourd bottles, a little basket made of bamboo cane and decorated with feathers, as well as antlers of deer or antelopes. The latter are fastened to the wall; they are supposed to be the seat of the

divinities of the forest and of the chase. The little basket is attached to a post in the hut, the special divinities of the clan-family are supposed to have their dwelling there. Two hazelnut twigs fastened underneath symbolize their power. The gourd bottles are used as containers for the sacrificial drink of rice liquor.(6)

6. Cf. Dor Nongbeoth-Puja,/The Nongbeoth Puja/, loc cit.

As treasures, which are handed down from generation to generation, are considered the rich ornaments of gold and silver, the heavy chains of coral, and the silk scarves, which are worn by the women at dancing ceremonies.

Also those things which the family huts contain in the way of furnishings and utensils, such as baskets, mats, looms, shields, arrows and bows, and brass pots for cooking and for water, earthen containers and brass plates are considered common property of the family.

/138/ The clan mother at the time has the entire property in her hands, she is the legal and sole guardian and manager of the property. Nothing can be lost even without her permission. No part of either the movable or immovable family possessions may be sold without her agreement. For the execution of the proper legal deed, as she is often ignorant of writing, she must place her fingerprint. Nothing may ever be given away: that would be an insult to the clan divinity since that would not mean esteeming and honoring their property but giving it away as being of no value. As a punishment for that the clan /mamm/ would also lose its other possessions and then live in poverty and disgrace. The individual members of the clan could sometimes be recruited for work for other clan-families as a kind of slave (imma). But they may not be taken up in their society as they do not belong to that clan and the clan gods of that family would not permit it. Therefore if, for example, a clan-family has rice fields which they do not cultivate and would gladly give to poorer relatives, they must at least receive the smallest rent as a charge for it. This consists usually of a good bottle of rice liquor, which has the value of about 75 pfennigs to honor the household divinities.

Before the clan mother gives her permission for the sale of common property, she listens to the advice of the other members of the clan. Actually according to the old tribal custom things should be as little sold as given away. It is said that in ages past the original ancestors, when the individual clans separated as tribities, apportioned out the then lands of field and wood, and these are supposed to form their inalienable clan property (mynsiem). To let it get out of one's possession would therefore be insulting the gods. However, that

could not prevent individuals from becoming needy through misfortune 421
e laziness and their trying to rent a part of their property for an annual 425
ayment or for a sum needed once. This is called han din pan, liter-
lly: begging to buy. The sense of relinquishing by lending /133/ is
ontained in this. For example, a field is worth 300 reichsmarks.
ifty or 100 reichsmarks are accepted for it and the creditor remains
he owner of the field until the money is repaid. This type of pur-
hase occurs frequently. There are frequently traders (songkhail)
who try to use such purchases to their own advantage. They turn over
he field to the debtor for further cultivation in return for payment in
roduce of 50 to 70 per cent of the harvest. After several years the
hole field is their property. Aside from this method, it also happens
hat instead of being able to repay the money the people need still
urther sums. In that case then the entire price of 300 reichsmarks is
aid and the actual purchase is considered completed; that is called
an din lot; literally: totally, completely sold. A family-clan which
radually loses its property in this manner descends into poverty and
eed. There is nothing else for it to do than to look for work else- [541]
here, to rent land or to sell the children as a kind of slaves to better
ituated people. If 40 reichsmarks are paid for a child of about 10
ears, he remains in the bondage of the buyer until the money can be
epaid. That happens only rarely. Besides food and the most neces-
ary clothing only one rupee is deducted annually as wage from the
urchase price; thus, practically, the child belongs to the buyer for
he duration of his life.

It is the duty of individual members of a family clan to work to- 423
gether so that the clan property will be maintained and will produce 424
he necessary amount for the maintenance of all. The clan mother
must oversee primarily that the appropriate customs and usages are
observed. She is held in high esteem by all. To do something
against her will, to offend her, to call her insulting names, or to go
so far as to strike her is considered sang (taboo), a severe crime that
causes misfortune. It is a great sin (pap) and a thoroughly great dis- 423
grace (angkrath eh rang) for the whole clan.(7) As long as a member 681
762.

7. Also considered similar crimes are selling clan pro-
perty in secret, incest, desecrating burial places in
a coarse manner, making use of holy grounds or woods.

[136] of the family has committed such a crime and has not begged
pardon from the clan mother and the elders of the clan, perhaps with
the words: pardon me, I have committed an error (he ning le nga leh

she does not have any daughter, the property will pass to the female descendants of sisters of Ka Long, as her elder sisters Ka Laimon and Ka Laiban have left no daughters. It is therefore necessary to distinguish carefully between an elder and a younger sister, and also similarly between sisters of the mother. The generation of the women of the same house and extended family requires to be noted with care.

The youngest daughter and heiress is termed the Ka Khaddah. As Cantlie remarks she "Ka Khaddah is the custodian of the family property, not the full heir in the sense known to other systems of law, but a limited heir. She is responsible for the performance of religious ceremonies.....; she cremates her mother, and if she be Ka Khaddah of the whole family, she puts the bones of all members in their final resting place under the stone (mawbah) of the clan. The expenses of this ceremony are considerable and for this reason she gets a larger share of property, or in some cases a piece of family property in addition and apart from her separate share. Members of the family who are unable to earn for themselves and have no children to earn for them have the right of being fed at the ing-Khaddah" (house of the heiress).

The management of the property is however vested in the men of the family. The ancestral property of the family of myself U Subu R..'s mother was under the management of U Joi, in his mother's life-time; then, on the death U Joi, the next brother U Doi became manager. After U Doi, the management came to U Subu Rai. After him, the authority will pass to U Hajon, as U Sumbursi is dead and then to U Nodem. Any sons of Ka Pyn and other sisters will not get any precedence over U Nodem. As the senior U Kni of the Iangbiah Kur, U Subu Rai is also the manager of the common property of the Kur. This land has been leased out to various persons and the total income is divided among the different houses of the Kur. Whenever there is money to be distributed U Subu Rai calls together all the representatives of the Iangbiah houses and

divides equally. U Subu Rai explained that each house counted as a separate unit. Thus if Ka Jem, Ka Jin and all their daughters were alive, the married daughters who lived in a separate house, namely, Ka Laimon, Ka Laiben, Ka Aimon and Ka Heimon of Ka Jem's house, and Ka Phro of Ka Jin's line, would each get a share. But Ka Jem and her Ka Khaddoh Ka Aiben who lives in the mother's house would get only one share. So would Ka Jin, Ka Kiriben and the unmarried daughters of the latter. The descendants of Ka Long would get seven equal shares for distribution to each house, and not two shares first, divided later into shares corresponding to the number of daughters for Ka Jem's and Ka Jin's house. The manager does not get any share of the collections. Authority in the management of the ancestral property therefore passes from one male to another, in the extended family, and the Kur, in a manner which necessitates a clear distinction of seniority and juniority of brothers, among themselves and also of sisters with regard to brothers.

The case of succession is similar. Gordon notes that the Siemship in Mylliem State passes from a man to his next brother, and "failing such brothers, by the eldest of his sisters' sons; failing such nephews by the eldest of the sons of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand nephews by the eldest of the sons of his mother's sisters" and so forth in the female line. In Nongkrem, the son or similar male relative of the High Priestess becomes by delegation a Siem. The office of the High Priestess passes from a woman to her eldest surviving daughter; and failing daughters to the eldest daughter of her eldest daughter; failing daughters of her eldest daughter, to the eldest daughter of her second daughter, and so on. This is the customary law of succession, and is stated by Gordon to be "uniform in all cases" practically.

Neither levirate, nor sororate are practised by the Khasis. Widows are stated (G) quite often not to remarry if there are daughters. There is no question of the control of the property

of the women by her husband. No occasion arises either of taking his place on death, by his brother or by sister's son; or of a sister of a deceased wife being made over to a man, as in the custom among Garos, where the husband of the latter manages the property of his wife. Among the Khasis, the widow or widower cannot normally remarry before the end of a year after the death of the husband or wife. When a year is over, a payment is made to the Kur of the deceased to remove the disability. If the man or woman want to remarry before the year is out, a larger sum is paid. In Mawphlang, a sum of Rs. 8-4-0 is paid at the end of the year and Rs. 11-4-0 for untimely remarriage (within the year). The payment is made to the Ka Khadduh of the deceased in each case, and a ceremony severing the relations with the dead spouse is performed. A pig is purchased with the money and it is sacrificed in the house of the Ka Khadduh by a man—usually a neighbour. If the deceased was a man, the following invocation is made: "Ha kane ka nied ia shim song song bad kein song song ia phi. Ka ingo ym ym ben ia khnid."

Free translation:—

"On this night the released person is sacrificing to you. The evils of unwedded (leaving the man) is hereby made pure."

The pig is then killed by thrusting an iron spike through the shoulder. It is then cooked and eaten by the people present. This mode of killing is known as "dong."

The mynsi Gongsing, whose genealogy has been noted, remarried a year after the death of his first wife Ka Sniamai. This woman died two years ago, and the ceremony for removing the bar on remarriage was performed only last year. The money was made over to an old man U Ba, who is well acquainted with the rites. He purchased a pig and killed it by the "dong" method in the compound of Ka Sniamai's mother, Ka Thewlien. The spike might be of wood or iron, stated U Rathon. I was informed by the mynsi U Babu Rai that the ceremony of

Referring to the first type, we may say that the second type results from the men of the house going out to marry women of other houses. As the men settle down in the wife's mother's house and later on set up a separate house on her land, the continuity of tradition in the house of birth is kept up by the women who remain behind.

It would however be a mistake to suppose that the land between the members born in a house is severed on marriage. We have noted before that the house of a dead man returns eventually to his mother's house, for final deposition in the clan cemetery, or at least that of the extended household. The bond between the mother's brother and sister's children has also been noted as well as the authority exercised by the former over the extended family.

Further links between a man and his mother's Kur will appear from a study of the rules of inheritance and land tenure with regard to men. Any property that a man acquires before marriage belongs to his mother's house. Mysori U Suba Rai, for example, earned money before his marriage, and he purchased some land with this amount, in a village called Mawbah. It will go to his sisters and their heiresses on his death. The earnings of a man after marriage, and after he has settled down in his wife's mother's house (or wife's house), among Khasis proper, generally go to the wife and daughters on death. But any gifts made by the parents at marriage have to be returned on death. Similarly, if a man has earned money after marriage, independently of his wife's capital, a part can be claimed on death by the man's mother's group.

Again, if a man returns to his mother's village after marriage, he can exercise his rights to cultivate the common land there. Every village community has its common land known as Ri Raid. As David Roy states (C9), "people can occupy a vast land where they build their houses and cultivate. For cultivation purposes land not more than can be cultivated is taken. The occupants can sell his house and the site and the garden of

his house or paddy field or grove; but the sale does not extend to anything more than his right of occupancy.....Any site, garden or piece of cultivation if abandoned, can be taken by another."

A son of a house of the village, of which the Kur is of the ancient settlers or has been given similar privileges, has the right of building a house, and of cultivating land in the Ri Raid. Reference has been made to the new practice whereby a man brings his wife from her mother's house to his own village. In such a case he may set up a separate house on the community land, and cultivate some of it, to maintain his wife and children. The property will pass, on his death, to his daughters as usual. It will not go to his mother or sister.

(a) The man U Sherlok married twice, but did not settle down with his wife on either occasion. He built a house in Mawphlang which is his mother's ancestral village and brought each wife there. Both of these were divorced in turn and have left. If any of his wives had lived with him the house would have gone to his daughters. Now, however, the heiress is Ka Jrem, the daughter of a sister. [Genealogy I(iii)].

(b) The woman Ka Lakiawn is of the old Lyngkhi clan of Mawphlang. When U Lyoon married her, he set up a house in Mawphlang and cultivated land. But on his death, the woman went away to Shillong with her children, about 10-15 years ago, selling the house and abandoning the jhum land. The son U Bullister has recently come to Mawphlang and is working in U Subo Bai's house. If he settles down, i.e., marries and wants to set up a house, he can do so on the Ri Raid. (Genealogy IV).

(c) The foundress of the Khar Dympep clan was a woman of the village Dympep, and of clan Khar Dohling. She had two other sisters. One of the three sisters went to Mylliem, and another came to Mawphlang while the third remained at Dympep as Ka Khatbih. The girl who went to Mylliem founded the Khar Sohnah Kur and the girl who came to Mawphlang founded

Khar Dumpep. These three clans—Khar Duhling, Khar Dumpep and Khar Sohmoh cannot intermarry on account of their common ancestry. U Aliesen, the sister's husband of U Subu Rai is of Khar Dumpep clan and furnished me with the above details. He stated that his ancestress married a man of the old settler clans of Mawphlang and came to her husband's village. This man, being of the Khadar Kur, could build a house and cultivate land from the community holding. The property thus acquired passed to the daughters; and gradually the clan Khar Dumpep grew more numerous, and acquired rights in the Ri Raid like an old clan. [Genealogy I(c)].

(d) The family of the first wife of U Orangsing furnishes another illustration. The woman Ka Li came with her widowed mother from Cherra. The father had been a Syntong from Jowai. The girl has been married by U Ibahun, who is a member of one of the old settler clans. He has built a house for his family and made an excellent potato garden out of the common land for the maintenance of his wife and children. They will inherit it from him according to the usual Khasi mode. [Genealogy II(c)].

(e) U Roberta who is a Syntong of Jowai, and a Christian by religion (Genealogy V) came to Mawphlang in 1930-31 and after a couple of years married a non-Christian Khasi girl by Khasi rites thereby losing his membership of the church. He cultivated Ri Raid land when he stayed with his wife's mother Ka Shami [Genealogy V]. This woman is of Khar Sohoo clan. One of her ancestresses, came to Mawphlang only a few generations ago, and married a man of the old clans. Her descendants have thereby obtained the privilege of cultivating Ri Raid. U Roberta has divorced his wife and no longer possesses this right. He now works as a tailor in the village, and lives with a friend near the bazaar.

(f) Gurdon has suggested that the large number of clans having Khar as the first part of the name of the Kur have originated from ancestresses who were carried off from the plains.

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While the traditions regarding the origin of Khar Dumpep and Khar Sohnoh collected by me do not support the view that the ancestress came necessarily from the plains, it is clear that they support Gurdon's hypothesis that those clans are derived from ancestresses who came from or settled in certain villages. It is evident that Gurdon's hypothesis implies that the husbands of these women, who brought them home from elsewhere, could clear land and transmit such property to their daughters, although the mother of the daughters did not own any land locally. This right to clear the Ri Raid is therefore not a recent innovation.

I have noted these details here as this aspect of inheritance from males has not been clarified elsewhere. It is not meant of course that this right to clear land extended to the special clan lands or family property matrilenial of the man. As noted before the Kni manages such land and makes over the income or produce to the women who are the owners. Even in such land, however, a man has some rights. Both Gurdon and Cantlie state that a male can adopt a blood relative of the same Kur if all the female members of the particular stock are dead. He himself holds the property for life only, when the women of the line are dead. On adopting a girl of the Kur, she becomes the keeper of the property and also his successor. But "the profits of his labours in the landed property can be used for his wife and children." The inherent right of the male is brought out to a certain extent in this rule also. Such private lands are known as Ri Kynti. It may be of the family or the clan. As an example of family land may be noted the case of the forest of U Nong Sohra, the husband of Ka Jem [Genealogy I(a)]. He cleared some Ri Raid land and planted pine trees there. Only the descendants of Ka Jem can cut trees in this forest which is now practically private property of this group. But the land is essentially Ri Raid in this sense that it cannot be alienated and when all trees have been cut away, any villager will be entitled to occupy it. The Khar Shing Kur as a whole has true private lands near the village. If people of other clans want to cultivate

it, they have to arrange with the U Kni, who is in this case U Babu of Mawphlang, elder brother of the Myntri, U Manna who represents this clan on the State organisation. Payment is made in money which is distributed to the different houses of the Kur. There is, however, Ri Kynti land of another kind, individual property which can be sold absolutely. It may be noted here that no rent is paid to the State or the British Government for the Ri Raid, Ri Kynti or other lands in Mawphlang, or in general in other Khasi States. The revenue of the State is derived from tolls levied on commodities sold in market places and also from fines and other minor sources.

The fundamental social and economic unit among Khasis is therefore the family house and the extended family associated with it; the Kur represents a later stage in its expansion. Marriage sets up new relations but does not disturb this basic structure of Khasi Society.

[p. 20[illegible]]

SOCIAL GROUPINGS AMONG THE KHASIS OF ASSAM

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Introduction

THE Khasis, who inhabit the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of Assam, are matrilineal. Like the Garos, they are matrilocal in residence. Exclusive ownership over family property is claimed by the Khasi women and the youngest daughter (*Ka Khadduh*) who lives permanently in the house of her mother, is the custodian of the family property and the holder of religion (*Ka lut ka-siewi*)[1].

This paper deals with the social groupings, namely, the clan, sub-clan and family, of the Khasis. The materials were collected in 1954 from Mawphlang, Cherrapunji and Mawlai and Mawsmai villages farther south of the Shora State.

Discussion

In the language of the Khasi, the prefix *Ka* is usually used before the name of a woman or any object belonging to a woman (or considered feminine). The use of *Ka* as a prefix before the name of each social group is suggested to have bearing on Khasi matriliny. *Kur* is not a very expressive and exact term for a clan. *Kakor*, which is supposed to have sprung from the woman (*long jaid na ka kyntkai*)[2] is more exact. Similarly, *Ka-K'juk* and *Ka-iing* denote the sub-clan and family respectively.

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[1] Gurdon, P. R. T., *The Khasis*, London, 1914 p. 58.

[2] Op. cit., page 58.

brother (actually not likely to happen), the levirate has no sociological implication in the social structure, which is specifically related to the residence rule. The levirate seems to have a significant function only when a marriage is virilocal—when the husband has full rights over his residence and property. This is also another aspect where the Khasi structure shows a marked difference from that of the Ashanti and the Ibo, etc.

VI. Elements of the Rule of Authority in an *Iing*

Among these successful matrilocal families, there are also shadows of a matrilineal order. These affect especially those men who are in the position of authority in an *iing*. Such a man, though he has an independent household with his wife and children, often visits his youngest sister's (or sister's) house, *iing* (*ha iing ane*), and sometimes stays there. Such a man's attachment to his *iing* is not only social or psychological, but also often economic. The man, as authority of his natal *iing*, usually has economic control over the management, particularly so, if his *iing* has considerable property or active trading business. As husband, father in his family he works for his wife and children, but often takes into consideration as well the interests of his *iing*. I found such cases especially among richer villagers in Shella and Jaitinga, where the main economic activities were based on trading.

Among the Khasi, it is quite a traditional rule of the division of labour that women engage in trading activities at markets whether on a large or small scale. Husbands may carry goods from field to market, but male members are kept away from the actual scene of the selling and buying. However, these activities on the part of the women are controlled and accounted for by their uncle or brother, or even son (or, if no male member is available, by the husband), though in many cases they form separate domestic families. The man's control over the trade appears more marked when the scale of business is large.

A man of Jaitinga, who worked in a shop in Hadling, spent his salary in keeping his wife and children, but at the same time he kept the accounts of his sister who was a professional merchant. Thus, the economy of the *iing* and that of the co-residential group are crossed by the dual role of the man. Hence, among the Khasi, residential autonomy is not always an indication of economic autonomy. However, it should be clearly understood that a man's acquired property goes to his co-residential group, not to his *iing*.

A man of authority is attached to his *iing* by the stronger ties of religious, social, and economic (management) duties as well as by

The Nayar type. The counter scheme of the Garo type, the co-residential type is 'brother-sister' instead of 'husband-wife'. The function of both line *A* and *B* is equally strong. This type is found among the traditional Nayar (except those in North Malabar) and the Minangkabau matrilineal people.

The Khasi type. The ideal co-residential type consists of a woman with either her husband or her brother. The function of line *A* is much stronger than that of line *B*. This type is found among the Khasi, the Naga, the Jaintia, the Tiruboni, the Naga-Jaintiaban Malay, the Van, etc.

The Ashanti type. The ideal co-residential type consists of a man with either his wife or his sister. The function of line *B* is much stronger than that of line *A*. This type is found among the Ashanti, the Gonasia Naga, the Mayumba, the Trobriands, the Nayar of North Malabar, etc.

In terms of the strong function of both lines *A* and *B*, both the Garo type and the Nayar type may fall into a similar category. But as already explained, their structure basically differs from one another, and clearly appears as the counter schemes of different residential arrangements. The Nayar type shares with the Khasi a rather similar structure in terms of a descent group equated with a property group, while in the Garo type the two lines *A* and *B* of a single descent group never form an independent property unit.

If, leaving aside the Garo type, we consider the three others, the Nayar type appears again different from the rest in so far as in it, both lines fulfill an equally strong function, while in the Khasi and Ashanti types, one of the two lines is always more developed functionally than the other. The Nayar type presents the highest degree of descent group solidarity among the three. This Nayar situation might be compared with that of the traditional Chinese patrilineal systems.[1] In both social systems the structural importance of marriage is minimized: the role of a spouse is only to ensure descendants of the matrilineal (patrilineal) group. The structural importance of a husband (wife) is almost neglected, while the wife (husband) holds the paramount locus in her (his) descent line. The descent group manifests the strongest solidarity within itself, neglecting affinal relations with other groups. This principle results in the custom of the "visiting husband" in the matrilineal system; and, in the patrilineal system, in a total social shift of the wife by her complete assimilation into her husband's group, and separation from her descent group,—she has no social and personal independent locus in terms of the structure. It is an interesting fact that the most extreme scheme of highly institutionalized unilineal systems can be seen among societies of pre-industrialized high civilization. These schemes are structurally opposed to those of the system of the society

1. Fortes touches this point in his paper (Fortes, 1959, p. xxii).